

# CIA Used Informants to Spy on

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WASHINGTON — The Central Intelligence Agency spied on Dr. Martin Luther King in the 1960s through informants, gathered records of King's telephone calls and photocopied some of his credit-card receipts and messages scrawled on business cards, according to documents in a federal lawsuit.

Many of the documents, disclosed in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit (Harold Weisberg vs. CIA, et al) and obtained by the Los Angeles Times, reflect an interest by the CIA in an alleged "Peking-line" communist influence on King and his followers.

The documents also contain discussions of how allegedly derogatory information about King could be used to discredit him as a civil rights leader.

One CIA informant suggested that King be "removed" as a black leader. "It is 'a's' (informant's name deleted) belief that somehow or other Martin Luther King must be removed from the leadership of the Negro movement, and his removal must come from with-

in, not from without," an internal CIA memo dated May 11, 1965, reads, adding that if whites contributed to King's ouster, it might make him a martyr.

"'A' feels that somewhere in the Negro movement, at the top," the memo continues, "there must be a Negro leader who is 'clean,' who could step into the vacuum and chaos if Martin Luther King were either exposed or assassinated."

The disclosure of the 373 pages of files, which contain numerous deletions, is thought to provide the first documentary evidence that the CIA engaged in surveillance of King in the United States before he was shot to death by an assassin in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

In 1975, when congressional hearings were called to investigate intelligence abuses, it was disclosed that the FBI had tried to "neutralize" King's effectiveness by eavesdropping on his motel rooms with microphones and on his telephone conversations with wiretaps

that were initially approved in 1963 by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

In the CIA files on King, the alleged-

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## King in 1960s, Documents Show

ly damaging information against him had been confirmed by an unidentified "highly placed official in the Department of Justice," said a memorandum dated June 9, 1965. The memo added that an informant had been told that an unidentified "Washington source had the entire King file in his office, including photographs and tapes."